India.

Modern India

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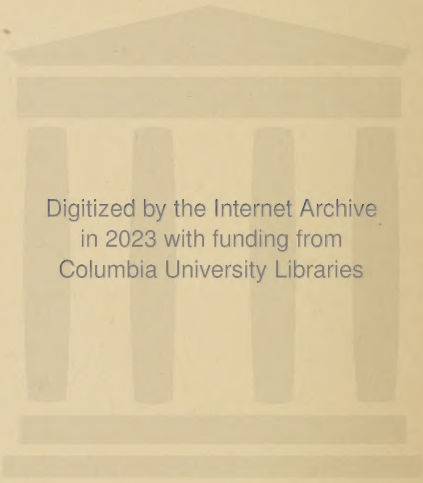
"When He saw the multitudes
He had compassion upon them"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Modern India

The swift-moving currents of modern life are nowhere deeper or more portentous than in the Indian Empire.

IT matters not by what name you call it—renaissance, reformation, revolution, reconstruction—there is a silent but potent movement at work in India to-day. Three hundred and fifteen millions of people are waking to a new valuation of life. Infinite power is latent in this rising tide of humanity. This is a population so vast that if the present European war were to depopulate France, Austria, Germany, England, Belgium and Turkey-in-Europe, these countries could be re-populated from India alone and still have enough people left to equal the number of inhabitants in the United States. In fact, the population of India exceeds that of all Europe except Russia, crowded into a territory one-third the size of the United States. What will it not mean to the world when vast India awakes and gives forth the riches of mind and heart which the centuries have poured into her life? No nation is more potential.

The evidences of the awakening are legion. No more is Matthew Arnold's interpretation correct,

"The East bows low before the blast
In silent, deep disdain;
She lets the legions thunder past,
To plunge in thought again."

And even Kipling, that great interpreter of the Orient's life, must revise his early Mark-Twain-ism,

"Here lies the fool
Who tried to hustle the East."

The "fool" may be dead—but the East is hustling just the same. How much the "fool" had to do with it does not greatly matter. The important thing is the fact itself.

We will group the evidences of this new reconstruction under three headings: The New National Unity, The New Social Order, and The Mass Movement Toward Christianity.

The survey must necessarily be but an outline sketch of present tendencies and developments.

I. THE NEW NATIONAL UNITY

The war has doubtless helped to precipitate a molding of the national mind. This must be the inevitable outcome of a crisis which has suddenly thrown together in brotherly relationships such divergent groups as Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist, Sikh, Christian, Anglo-Indian and Colonist. Nothing unites men more solidly than the facing of a common foe in a fight for common ideals. There is a remarkable loyalty on the part of the Indian people toward Great Britain. This fact will stand out in bold relief when we remember that heretofore there has been no such thing as an Indian nation with a consciousness of unity and solidarity. Races have been antagonistic and hateful one to another. Mr. Sydney Brook declared in the *North American Review:* "Enmity among the Indian peoples has been as real as that of the Pole to the Prussian or the mongoose to the snake; while races are as far removed from one another in interests, instincts and culture as the New Englander from the Patagonian."

India is made up of fourteen provinces and six hundred and seventy-five native states, while there are one hundred and forty-seven distinct languages, twenty-

three of which are each spoken by at least a million people. To see this vast, unrelated, divided people seek co-operation and unity is a miracle indeed. They are becoming conscious of their common nationality. Hindu and Moslem communities—out of an age-long antagonism—are coming to appreciate each other's worth and are uniting in patriotic nationalism.

At the meeting of the All-India Moslem League in Agra and at the meeting of the Indian National Congress in Karachi, the presidential addresses gave special attention to the need for developing friendly relations and cordial co-operation between the Hindu and the Moslem communities, and strong resolutions favoring co-operation were passed by both bodies!

Christian missions must of necessity be strengthened and adjusted to modern conditions. We dare not let Moslem and Hindu alone unite to form the new national life. Christian ideals and principles must be at the heart of it. Herein lies the only real and permanent hope of the new India.

There is a peril in some of the agitation which accompanies the awakening. One wing of agitators is opposed to the Government and western ideals. Extremists arise out of every such condition. It has always been true in human history. Mr. Valentine Chirol, in his volume, *Indian*

Unrest, quotes as follows from one of the leading journals:

"By whatever name—anarchists or seditionists—those may be called who are taking part in the movement for independence, however many patriots may be sent to jail or into exile, yet the spirit pervading the whole atmosphere will never be checked, for the spirit is so strong and spontaneous that it must clearly be directed by Divine Providence."

Extremes will be corrected by the reaction of other forces. All parties are sincere—this is the real hope—and out of the unrest and the agitation will come a constructive policy of national advance. Both government and society are adjusting themselves to the inevitable. The significant thing is the new national unity and patriotism which is growing out of the break-up of old ideals and divisions.

II. THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER

Two outstanding characteristics of the new social atmosphere are the attack on caste and the demand for the education of women. Caste was denounced as a national peril at a meeting of Hindu men in Bombay, presided over by the high-caste king of one of the richest native states. Christian writers and speakers have never said such bitter things about caste as these words by an educated Hindu Reformer: "Caste has produced disunion and discord. It has made honest manual labor contemptible, and retarded progress. It has brought on physical degeneracy by confining marriage within narrow circles. It has suppressed individuality and independence of character, and while affording the opportunity of culture to the few, it has caused the degradation of the masses. The social system and the whole tone of religious thought with its philosophy of fatalism is against the individualistic self-assertion necessary to success in the struggle for existence. It is opposed to co-operation for civic ideals, and it promotes indifference to life."

A non-Christian newspaper writes in letters of flame the following charge: "It is not possible to describe in temperate

words the terrible havoc which caste has wrought in India. The preservation of caste means the suicide of the whole nation."

Imagine how hard it must be for the bones of the ancestors to keep from turning over in their graves when you read in an Indian newspaper that in Bombay last December a company of Hindus held an all-India inter-caste dinner, organized with the avowed object of doing away with caste differences. There were four hundred and fifty guests, of whom two hundred and twenty-five were Brahmans, fifty were women, and twenty were "untouchable outcastes."

But not only in such feasts do we see the castes sitting together. One of the most notable advances has been made by the Dewan of Travancore, who nominated two members of the so-called depressed classes to seats in the popular Assembly, the local Parliament which meets annually under his presidency. For two sessions these "unapproachables" have sat side by side with the representatives of the aristocracy of the land and taken their due part in the deliberations of the Assembly.

The breakdown of caste will mean the opening of a door of hope to India's depressed millions. They are being stirred for the first time in all history. Hope has found a place in their hearts.

The complex and sweeping nature of the social reform movement may be seen in the resolutions passed by a recent congress of Hindus in the Punjab at Lahore. Among the resolutions were:

1. The amelioration of the oppressed classes
2. Prohibition of early marriage
3. Education of women
4. Relief of widows and orphans.

This is nothing short of a revolution in the whole life and thought of Hinduism.

"The old order changeth,
Giving place to new."

Ancient Hinduism has regarded womanhood with bitter contempt and suspicion; the sacred books declare that "to educate a woman would be like feeding a serpent milk; she would but turn her education into poison." In the old days only the immoral temple girls were taught to read, and respectable girls would conceal any education out of shame. What think you to read a newspaper account of a social conference of Indians in 1916 which makes the following revolutionary declaration?

"This conference is strongly of opinion that every effort should be made to promote and expand the education of women —elementary, secondary, and higher—

and considers it the duty of all educated Indians to take steps for the improvement of existing schools and for the establishment of others.

"This conference is of opinion that girls should *not* be married before they are sixteen.

"This conference is strongly of opinion that the injustice of prohibiting young widows in certain castes from remarrying should be removed, and that those who remarry should not be excommunicated."

The root of all social progress lies in the condition of womanhood. Miss Eleanor McDougall writes in the *International Review of Missions:* "India at present needs, as it never needed before, a supply of native women trained to habits of independent thought and serious study. It is most important that the university women of India, whose influence will probably be out of all proportion to their numbers, should be trained by Christians." What greater opportunity has ever come to the Christian Church!

III. THE MASS MOVEMENT TOWARD CHRISTIANITY

The masses of India's population find in Christianity the fulfilment of their spiritual, moral and material aspirations. It is ever so. The common people hear Him gladly. He is eyes to the blind, release to the captive, and good-news to the poor.

Lord Curzon, in giving his vice-regal valedictory to India, bore a definite testimony to the place of the common people in the nation's life. "My eye," he said, "has always rested upon a larger canvas, crowded with untold numbers, the real people of India, and distinct from any class or section of the people. It is the Indian poor, the Indian peasant, the patient, humble, silent millions, the eighty per cent. who subsist on agriculture. He is the bone and sinew of the country; by the sweat of his brow the soil is tilled. He should be the first and final object of every viceroy's regard. He is the man we desire to lift in the world, to rescue from tyranny and oppression."

Nine-tenths of the people live in villages. In the whole vast population there are only twenty-nine cities of more than one hundred thousand. The village is the unit of life in India. Whole villages

are turning to the Christian Church for baptism. The "Chaudhri," or head man, of the village has become the evangelist. If the mayors of the American towns should suddenly become evangelists, calling the people to repentance, we would account it a miracle. It is even more a miracle in India.

All missions are struggling with the difficulty of finding and training workers to instruct the masses gathered in. The task of organizing the converts into churches is both difficult and urgent. One mission has fifty thousand on its waiting list, another one hundred and forty thousand, and yet another one hundred and fifty-three thousand. With sufficient Christian teachers and equipment two million low-caste people can be baptized and trained in ten years.

A perpetual Pentecost! A harvest greater in one generation than that produced in four hundred years in Europe! An increase in the United Province of one thousand per cent. in the Christian population since 1881, according to the civil census report. An increase in ten years in the Punjab from 37,000 to 163,000,—last year one mission baptizing 38,000.

What will be the answer of American Christianity to such a challenge? There is but one answer—"go or send." We dare not fail to advance in a day like this.

The India Mass Movement Commission, of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Foreign Missions, plans to secure One Million Dollars to take advantage of this strategic opportunity. With this amount it is estimated that not less than a half million people will be baptized within ten years and provision made for their training. All the social and moral reconstruction now taking place among this vast people may be traced to the influence, either direct or indirect, of the Christian message. Now is the time for Christianity to press every advantage. A nation is being born in a day.

The commission solicits your co-operation. For full particulars write Fred B. Fisher, Executive Chairman, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York.